

# RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

COME NOW, AND LET US REASON TOGETHER.—ISAIAH 1. 18.

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## REMARKS ON A PROBATIONARY STATE.

[CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 93.]

Let us now enquire of the Calvinist, how he can reconcile this doctrine of a probationary state with the idea of absolute election or reprobation—will any of the elect, by neglecting their “day of grace,” be exiled heaven? Will any of the reprobated, by improving it, escape Hell? To admit either proposition would be, in so many words, to assert the ridiculous doctrine that the elect, notwithstanding God’s foreknowledge and foreordination, can by their own acts, reprobate themselves; and vice versa, that the reprobated have it in their power to ensure their own election, or, at least, that the certainty of the election or reprobation of any depends not on the will of God, but on the will of the creature—and yet this must be true if the doctrine of a probationary state, as preached by them, be true.

2d. If it be supposed that the mercy of God wills, or simply desires, “the salvation of the whole world,” and during their state of probation, labours with the spirits of mankind to induce them to turn to him from sin, and before they die, to do something in order that his infinite desires may be fulfilled in their salvation, and yet man, to the hour of his death, resist the “calls of grace,” and renders it, therefore, necessary for God, contrary to his desire, (“for he is not willing that any should perish,”) to plunge him hereafter, into an eternal hell, one of two things must be true: either that God’s mercy is insufficient to overcome the stubborn wills of his creatures, and, hence, that unless man consent his desires will never be fulfilled; or that God is a changeable being, in reference to a majority of his children desiring to-morrow the opposite of what he wills to-day—being now merciful, but relentlessly cruel in eternity. Let the reader choose between these two dilemmas, for one must be true, if the doctrines of a probationary state be admitted.

Now, it is unnecessary to contend from the Scriptures for the absolute power and sovereignty of God, for every page of the divine testimony declares, that “*he will do all his pleasure*,” and that no power can withstand him—that the soul of man is with him as the pliant clay in the hands of the potter, which he can mould to any form that seemeth to him best—hence, if it be true that God wills the entrance of all mankind into immortality and glory, let their hearts be as stubborn and unyielding as the adamant rock, love divine is sufficient to soften and bend them to its will, that in God’s own time, they may yield to him a perfect obedience as heirs and subjects of his eternal kingdom. Nor, is it necessary to bring forward Scripture evidence to prove to a professedly Christian community, that God is necessarily unchangeable in all his perfections—that his love, his favour, and “*his mercy endureth forever*,” for, all who read the Bible must admit the fact; and it is upon this perfect immutability of our Divine Parent; that our faith rests without doubt or wavering. Were God to change—were his mercy ever to become extinct in reference to a single, the most unworthy of his creatures, where would be our confidence for ourselves? upon what would we rest the anchor of our hope?—for, though we feel that God has been merciful and good in times past, yet the very

idea of the future would overwhelm us with despair—we having no surety that the next hour may not find us perishing beneath the frown of a revengeful Deity.

If we admit the doctrine of life being a probationary state, it necessarily implies the truth of the third proposition stated in our last, viz.—that with the same moral character man descends to the tomb he rises in eternity, and, according as it is good or bad, virtuous or simple, so will his eternal condition be either happy, or miserable. That this is no false deduction from the above sentiment, is proved by the fact of our opponents pressing them upon their hearers, in their public ministry, as parallel doctrines: Hence, we are told “now,” meaning time, “is the day of salvation;” and if, before the hour arrives in which his “soul shall be demanded” of him, the sinner has not been regenerated, or experienced “the new birth,” there is no more hope for him; for, “in the grave there is no work or device,” and when the Judge of all flesh passes his final sentence, it will be, “Let him that is filthy, be filthy still,” throughout all eternity.

The mere statement of this sentiment is sufficient to prove to every candid Christian its discrepancy with the word of truth; but as it is one much insisted upon by Unitarians, and seems to be, with many, an apparent stumbling-block in the road to what we consider truth, it deserves a somewhat minute examination.

Keeping out of sight, for a moment, the express declaration of Scripture to the contrary, let us admit, that men’s moral characters are fixed at the hour of death, and by so doing we give a death-blow to the hopes of all. We close up the only door of escape from eternal condemnation for any individual of the human family. None, whether on earth he be considered as a saint or sinner, can be admitted into Heaven, hereafter, unless he undergo, some time after death, a change to a greater degree of purity.—The scriptures declare, on almost every page, that “*there is not a just man upon earth, who doeth good and sinneth not*.”—Eccle. vii. 20.—All, therefore, must descend to their “appointed house” more or less morally corrupt—all are buried in corruption and dishonour. Now, corruption, says the apostle, cannot inherit incorruption, (Corinth. xv.) which amounts, according to the doctrine of popular Christianity, to a total exclusion of all. But, this is not all: when all mankind shall be judged by the law, according to their deeds, a period our opponents invariably carry beyond the resurrection, we are most positively assured by “the word of God,” that every one, without respect of persons, “who has done wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he has done;” and that, “by the law no flesh can be justified,” but by it “every mouth shall be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.” (Rom. ii.—iii. Col. iii. 25.)

Now, the day of probation being passed—no possibility being offered for a change—he who is thus declared filthy, must of course remain filthy to all eternity. Admitting, therefore, the Scriptures to be true, in the declarations quoted above, and the creeds of human invention widen the kingdom of the adversary, and extend his rule, so as not only to include “the majority,” but every individual of God’s rational creation, themselves not excepted. It will not do to say, that, by the *law of works*, all will be condemned, but, by the *law of faith*, some will be acquitted; for there is not, in the Scriptures, a single syllable to war-

Mace

rant such a conclusion. When all mankind shall appear before God, whenever that is to take place, they are to be judged **OUT OF THE LAW**; on this point, the testimony is incontrovertible. But, on our part, we feel no hesitation of admitting a judgment according to the law of faith; for it makes no difference in the result, if the scriptural requisites of faith be kept in view. The Scriptures declare, positively, that all faith unaccompanied with works fit for repentance, is dead—(James ii.—Acts. xxvi. 20)—that, by the *fruit*, (the effects, or works,) the *tree*, (faith, or system of doctrine,) is to be known, and *every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire.*—Matthew vii.

Had it not been our desire to prove our opponents doctrine totally untenable, arguing on their own acknowledged principles, in connexion with scripture, the above reasoning would have been unnecessary; for it would have been sufficient for us to have referred at once to the "page of truth," and opposed the doctrine resulting out of the idea of a probationary state, by the direct testimony of the Apostle, which he received from Heaven, that "all mankind," without a single exception, "shall be changed" to a state of incorruption, glory and happiness; and that, not during time—nor at the hour of death—nor in the grave; but when "time shall be no more"—at the resurrection!—and this change is to be momentary, instantaneous, and will be effected not by the works or faith of the creature, but by the power of God!—(1 Cor. xv.)

Indeed, prove the resurrection of *all*, and we prove the eternal happiness of *all*—a state of immortality after death being perfectly synonymous with the entire cessation of fallibility or sin—of misery or suffering.

From whence does sin proceed—of what is it born? From the carnal mind, which is of the earth—"earthly, sensual and devilish," (Rom. viii.—5 et seq.) Sin is intimately connected with man's earthly condition, and with it will be destroyed! Hence, to prove that man will be miserable, and of course sinful in eternity, it will be necessary to prove that he will rise from the dead, with an earthly or carnal body, for, if with a spiritual body, he cannot be supposed to have any carnal propensities. Further, to cause the continuance of any part of mankind in sin, it will, we rather think, be essential that their future existence should be among beings, and in a society pretty much the same as we now find on the earth; for, to argue that the sinner will be totally corrupt, without any admixture of good, will be, we conceive, the same as arguing for his total extinction as a rational and moral being. Evil, it must be admitted, is a negative quality—that is, an extinction of good; and where all good is absent, we have an extinction of all moral existence—a state incapable of any other than corporeal suffering, and which would constitute a being of about the same grade of intellectual or moral existence with a continued *idiot*, or more properly a *maniac*!

But, thanks be to God, who has declared, by the mouth of his messengers, Christ, and his Apostles, that, although we descend to the grave, carnal, sensual and corrupt, we shall be raised from death's unconscious sleep, holy, spiritual, immortal, like those blest spirits who surround continually the divine throne! (1 Corinth. xv.)

There is no state of probation allowed to man—he is called upon to render continual obedience, and, if this be not given, his condemnation and punishment lingereth not through years nor ages, but is as swift as certain!—a crime once committed, there is no door for escape from the vengeance of the violated law—repentance nor faith will aught avail the sinner for what he has done though they are the only security by preventing a continuance in, or repetition of sin, against future misery! "Turn ye then, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die saith the Lord." (Ezek. xxxiii. 11.)

It may be supposed, that by thus contending against the doctrines of our opponents, as unrational and contradictory

of Scripture, we bring an implied and general charge against them of ignorance and deception; but this is by no means our intention; we believe that many are honestly deceived, and this not from want of sense, but from a real indolence of the judgment or power of reasoning, which induces them to take things upon trust, and allow others to think for them—in consequence of which, under the influence of this mental ositancy, they readily yield themselves, body and soul, to the opinions of others, and follow such opinions blindfold. But, let it be recollected, that as he who has been habituated to a continued state of bondage, loses his love of freedom, so those who neglect to exert their reasoning faculties, and humbly bow "in verba magistri," become at length incapable of carrying on a train of consequences in their minds, and weighing exactly the preponderance of contrary proofs and testimonies, and are thus rendered the easy dupes of every plausible dogmatist.

From the (Boston) Universalist Magazine.

### THE WAY OF THE TRANSGRESSOR IS HARD.

Being heartily desirous of contributing my mite for the promotion of holiness of heart and holiness of life, and considering the methods commonly adopted for this end productive of opposite effects, I have endeavoured to illustrate the subject by scripture, reason and experience.

When teachers and members of Calvinistic churches inform us that fear of endless punishment is their only excitement to a virtuous life, if they speak truly, they confess themselves in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity; for they are such slaves to sin, that the love and goodness of God, the melting charity of the Redeemer and the softening rain of the heavenly spirit are not sufficient to deter them from the perpetration of murder, and to constrain them to manifest their love to God in all holy and hearty obedience, unless to all is superadded eternal damnation. When the public teachers of pure and undefiled religion acknowledge their hearts so fatally infested with the loathsome leprosy of sin, can they expect holy and upright conduct in their hearers, as they have always told them God is a hard master, an austere exactor, reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he has not strewed. The cry usually made is, did I believe in Universalism, I would commit every crime of every name. This is simply saying, I hate God, I desire not the knowledge of his ways, and could I free myself from his abhorrent and rigorous service, and walk in the flowery paths of iniquity, without incurring the danger of endless woe, I would sin with all freedom, and spend my days in pleasure. This is a revival of the ancient complaint of the Jews, and it fits the wicked of all nations, and ages. The common notion is, that the righteous must deny themselves all the happiness of this life, and obey God through fear of hell, that they may enter heaven hereafter. Just such a fancy some of the Israelites indulged, and therefore murmured, it is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? and now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered. A good man would act uprightly, did he know all the fires of hell were quenched, and that conscious being would cease at death. The Apostle John has told us in what way a love of God is evidenced, which is in keeping his commandments with a joyful heart; and if any one thinks them grievous, and would, could he safely have his desire, prefer to disobey them, he plainly declares he does not love God, and that he honours him with his lips only, while his heart is far from him. Whoever instructs mankind to consider the way of transgression easy, is teaching for doctrine a sentiment which is grateful to the wicked and depraved heart, and well calculated to perpetuate the reign



of iniquity. It is a doctrine the bible pointedly reprobates, because it not only strengthens the hands of the sinner, but dismays and enfeebles the upright. If we examine the following quotation, we shall discover that this false preaching is of ancient origin, with lies have ye made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life. The promise of a sensual paradise has been sufficient to stimulate the Mahometan to the most painful labours, marches, battles and pilgrimages; and cannot the assurance of a heaven of unmixed virtue and spotless purity influence the believing christian to walk in ways of pleasantness, and in paths of peace, unless he is in constant dread of quenchless burnings? People undertake many things in this world for the sake of gain, in which more fatigue is endured than is necessary to overcome the malignity of our nature and render our feelings subject to the controul of reason; yet the thought of eternal punishment never enters their minds during the time they are engaged in these pursuits. It is hence evident that the threatenings of damnation do not constitute the strongest inducement to action, and as the most powerful persuasions should be used in the cause of religion, we may lay them out of the account, and say, the goodness of God leads to repentance and holy living. If Christ's pretended disciples need the fear of hell to prevent their wicked passions from breaking out in the most abominable deeds in this world, they will need a real hell in the next, to prevent their roasting and crucifying each other in heaven. But it must be recollected that the torments of damnation will deeply affect the fears of the saints, or that they will not check their evil propensities, or restrain them from acts of outrage.—But John describes saints of a different character, and serving God under the influence of different motives. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth, is not made perfect in love. It is plain from these reasonings of the apostle that there is no fear in heaven, and that those who are most heavenly have least fear, and that the bond slaves of sin have most. The scriptures abundantly testify that the way of the transgressor is hard; that his feelings are in complete anarchy; that he enjoys no peace and that he is under the goadings of an exasperated conscience. When teachers describe the pleasure of sinning in rich and flowery language, and wreath each fragrant enormity with a festoon of opening roses; they not only contradict God, but the reason and experience of all ages.—It is an evil and a bitter thing to forsake the living God, and to trust our fears of misery for excitement to virtue, and stainless purity. Men must serve God through love in spirit and in truth, or their adoration is insincere, and like the homage of devils, who fear and tremble. No parent believes his child entertains great regard for him, when he says, father, if you did not threaten me with the heaviest punishment in case of desertion, I would this day abandon your employment, and engage in the service of your bitterest enemy. When this similitude is applied to the subject under examination, we at once see what the character of this child is. He virtually says, I hate and detest God with my whole heart, and if he did not guard the path of duty with the livid lightnings of hell, he would not find me in the number of his worshippers.

In view of all these considerations, I cannot persuade myself to close, without giving a solemn admonition to children and parents on this momentous subject. Children remember your Creator now, in the days of your youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when ye shall say, we have no pleasure in them. Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth. Rec-

collect that those children who disobey their parents are likely to disregard the laws and rulers of the country in which they live, and the probability is, that they will die an ignominious death, on the gallows or scaffold. Listen not to the false teachers, who assure you sin is productive of happiness, and that a life of transgression, is a life of joy. My dear young friends, my God hath said there is no peace to the wicked; I conjure you therefore, by the goodness of God, by the tears, and groans, and prayers of the Redeemer, and by your desire for heaven, to abandon all sinful ways, all wicked company, and to serve the Lord with your whole hearts; then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your health shall spring forth speedily; and your righteousness shall go before you, and the glory of the Lord shall be your reward.

Parents, bring up your children, not in the fear of hell, but in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.—Train them in the love of truth and uprightness, and your latter days shall witness that they do not depart from them. Provoke them not to wrath, but teach them with all gentleness, improving the youthful season to instil the precepts of Jesus, and to infuse a love for evangelical piety. Never fill their minds with dread of unreal beings, but instruct them to entertain just and rational ideas of God and all his works. Lead them along, step by step, on the delightful road to heaven, and never impede their advance, by giving too much indulgence to fancy, or by following the ruinous systems of others. If you pursue this course, the blessing of God will rest upon you, your children will be dutiful and engaging; troops of guardian angels will encamp about your dwelling and the summer smile of heaven will live in your hearts. You and your children will be sharers in mutual joys in this fleeting existence, and at last, constitute one family of love in heaven. Your cares and sorrows will be lightened, your way smoothed, and the journey through this wilderness would be the heavenly Canaan cheered by the early piety and smiling innocence of your fellow-travellers. May parents and children give heed to these counsels of a friend, remembering they are not simply founded on the reason and experience of this world, but also on the wisdom of heaven; and that they are given with an earnest desire, a fervent prayer that they may liberate from the vain theories of human device, and, under the blessing of God, render the dear youth holy, humble and harmless disciples of Jesus, and parents, strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

May God's eternal blessing rest  
On all the blooming youth;  
May ev'ry child's and parent's heart,  
Receive, and love the truth.

HERMES.

#### CALVINISM.

The following delineation of Calvinism is from Fox's Lecture on "The influence of religious systems on society."

Genuine Calvinism is framed for power and permanence. It despises ceremony, and rules the feelings with a rod of iron. It has all the energy of mahometanism, in its most vigorous days, but without those seeds of weakness which so soon sprung up in its prosperity. The perpetual modifications of modern Calvinists have deprived the system of much of the gloomy grandeur, stern consistency, and almost omnipotent controul over the mind, which belonged to it originally. Those advocates have hereby shewn their own amiability, their respect for the scriptures, and the approximation of their party towards pure christianity. They have suffered reason to step beyond her allotted province in their creed, where she is treated as a slave, and employed to do the druggery of completing and cementing parts, but not allowed to touch the foundations of the fabric. Calvinism is great only when taken as a whole; and then formidable because, on erroneous principles, and for perverted objects, it exercises so much the powers of the

understanding, and so completely pervades the mind with limited in their operation, by such theories. It is not sur-  
its tyrannous influence. It does not enfeeble or degrade, prising, however it may be deplored, that they should lead  
but embitter, darken, and pervert the soul. The effects of to such views of the endless misery of others, as are ex-  
this system on society are in strong contrast with those re- pressed in the following extract from the writings of one  
sulting from the milder and purer faith delineated in the of the ablest defenders of Calvinism :

The character of God is exhibited in different lights. It may be said by all that he is supremely excellent, but the agreement is only verbal, for the details of this excellence display a complete contrariety. The opposite believers trace it in God as loving all his creatures, and as loving only a part ; as forming all for happiness, and as foredooming numbers to misery ; and as making us individually responsible, and as condemning and saving by moral substitution ; as forgiving freely on repentance, and as dispensing mercy only after a satisfaction to his justice ; as punishing to correct, and as condemning vindictively, and forever. Have these opposite believers the same notion of goodness ? If so, it is impossible, whatever be professed, that they should alike recognize it in their God. But if each believe in the absolute perfection of his God, their notions of moral excellence must be widely different, of that excellence to which they render their highest admiration, by which they form their own characters, and the imitation of which is the first principle of their religion.—So far as this dark notion of the Deity is unchecked by the native movements of the heart, the unequivocal precepts of religion, and the intermixture of better principles, it tends to form a gloomy bigot, miserable in himself and pernicious to others.

And has not the notion that conversion from sin to holiness is an immediate and miraculous work of the Holy Spirit on the mind, which no human power can attain, and when attained, no human power destroy, an influence on society to be deprecated by the philanthropist ? Does it not produce presumption in some, and despair in others ? It has produced them widely and dreadfully. How deplorable his state, who believes in election, but is unconvinced of his own election ; and in miraculous conversion, which he cannot satisfy himself that he has ever felt ; over whose devoted head have rolled, in imagination, the thunders of Almighty wrath ; who feels himself already fettered in every limb, and waiting for execution ; with no hand on earth to aid, no pitying voice from heaven to speak the words of mercy and of power, the conscious, helpless child of depravity and of misery, of everlasting misery ! And suppose this much desired conviction gained ; his eternal salvation is now secure ; he may, to use a favorite expression, "fall foully, but not finally." How immense the distance between him and the beings amongst whom he lives and moves ! He is a child of God, but they are the children of the devil ; his mind is the illumined and purified residence of the Holy Ghost, theirs the abode of total and invincible depravity ; he is clothed with the spotless robe of imputed righteousness, while their seeming virtues are but splendid sins. Alike as they may seem to human eye, there is the awful difference of spiritual life and death, the favor and wrath of God, and an eternal destiny of joy and anguish. Is human nature to be trusted on this giddy elevation ? Is this a faith which "worketh by love ;" or is it not in danger of becoming the source of pride, censoriousness, presumption and selfishness ?

Not only is heaven supposed to be the peculiar inheritance of the elect ; and saving faith, the faith of Calvinism more or less rigorously interpreted, an indispensable mark of election ; but earth is preserved only for their sakes, to be the scene of their redemption, calling and sanctification, and when their number is completed, this goodly and glorious frame of things is to be dashed to pieces like useless machinery.

"Thus shall this moving engine last,  
Till all his saints are gathered in,  
Then for the trumpet's dreadful blast  
To shake it all to dust again !"

WATTS.

The benevolent feelings must be injured, and very much

"The saints in heaven will behold the torments of the damned. The smoke of their torments ascendeth up for ever and ever ! They shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. So shall they be tormented in the presence of the glorified saints !

"Hereby will saints be rendered more sensible how great their salvation is ; when they see how great the misery is from which God has saved them, and how great a difference he has made between their state and the state of others, who were by nature, and perhaps for a time by practice, more sinful and hell-deserving than any. It will give them a greater sense of the wonderfulness of God's grace towards them !—Every time they look upon the damned, it will excite in them a lively and admiring sense of the grace of God in making them to differ.

"The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever ! It will not only make them more sensible of the greatness and freeness of the grace of God in their happiness, but it will really make their happiness the greater, as it will make them more sensible of their own happiness. It will give them a more lively relish for it ; it will make them prize it the more, when they see others who were of the same nature, and born under the same circumstances, plunged into such misery, and they so distinguished ! Oh ! it will make them sensible how happy they are ! A sense of the opposite misery, in all cases, greatly increases the relish of any joy or pleasure !"

This passage, as to the spirit which it breathes, the system from which it flowed, or the effect of that system upon which the social feelings of our nature, requires no comment.

Univ. Mag.

From the Philadelphia Gazetteer.

"As the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on bowels of Mercy."—Coll. iii. 12.

The whole of the Divine law is fulfilled in love to God and love, universal love, to man ; and no one, with whatever degree of respect the world may look upon his piety and religion, if he be without benevolence, charity, and mercy towards all the human family, can expect to hear the voice of the Spirit of God whispering in his heart, "Well done thou good and faithful servant—enter ye into rest." Hence, Christ demands of his disciples that they should love one another, and all who hear him, all who would be his, he calls upon to extend their love, not only to their friends, but to their enemies also—to be merciful even as God is merciful. Leaving the general subject, it is our intention, in this essay, to consider only that branch of Christian love, which consists in a kind, compassionate, sympathising spirit towards those who are in misery, prompting us to assist, relieve, or at least to alleviate, their miseries, as far as it lies within our power, and exhibiting itself in daily acts, tending to aid, to improve, and to render happy the family of mankind.

As there could have been no place for the exercise of Divine mercy, unless sin had made its entrance into the world, so it is because man is miserable that we are enabled to extend towards him "bowels of compassion." Were man without sin, without care—were he not liable to misery and pain, he would not need our pity ; but, because God has created him liable to suffer, and dependant for happiness upon the kind offices of his fellow man, we are called upon to extend to him that Christian mercy which looketh not only at its own things, but also on the things of others ; weeping with those who weep ; pitying and sympathising with the pains of others' bodies—the troubles and perplexities of others' minds—their wants



and necessities—their oppressions and afflictions—their disasters and disappointments; and when in its power, laboring to mitigate all these afflictions, by pouring out its soul to the hungry; by clothing the naked; by helping the sick; pleading the cause of the oppressed; administering counsel to the perplexed, and comfort to the afflicted; by doing every thing to instruct the ignorant, and reclaim the wicked and erroneous; and what it cannot do itself, rejoicing to see done by others; giving every encouragement in its power to every design and endeavour to reform men's manners, improve their hearts, and to save them from the painful and debasing slavery of vice.

Mercy is, indeed, one of the most amiable and Godlike of all the Christian virtues, being that temper and disposition by which we, in a most eminent degree, resemble, and bear the image of the blessed God, as exhibited in his Son, Christ Jesus, who forgave us ten thousand talents, and who is merciful, even to the evil and unthankful. It is written for our instruction, that they "shall have judgment without mercy, who shew no mercy;"\* "with the merciful, God will show himself merciful; and blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain the mercy of God."

Though our mercy, to be truly Christian, must be as extensive as the race of man, yet will it be shewn, in the first instance, and in the most conspicuous manner, to those whom God and nature have connected most intimately with us—to our families, our relatives and friends: For, it would be but mockery and deceit, and not mercy, to pity and assist strangers, while those of our own household, kindred and friends, are disregarded and in misery.

Our Christian brethren, likewise, those of the household of the faithful, claim a peculiar part in our "bowels of mercy." If one member suffer, all should suffer with it; hence are we to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. But, at the same time, we are not to overlook, in our mercy, our unrepentant brethren—those who are yet in the bondage of sin, and in the gall of bitterness. They constitute proper objects and sure tests of a merciful disposition; their state and condition is one in the highest degree miserable, and which loudly demands our pity. They are our fellow creatures; they are children of the same common Father; they are our neighbours, whom we are called upon to love even as ourselves. It may, therefore, be depended upon, that those who have no pity for sinners, but who despise, condemn and hate them, extending not towards them the offices of love, are strangers to Christian mercy.

A merciful disposition shines forth with greatest lustre and advantage, when it pities and forgives, as it is wont to do, those who, by injurious treatment to ourselves, are wholly at our mercy, and upon whom we have it fully in our power to satiate our revenge, and when we may do so even under the colour of justice. This is, indeed, Godlike mercy; and, unless we do practice it, we know that we have not forgiveness from our heavenly Father.†

It belongs, however, to Christian wisdom and prudence, to judge as to the manner in which such acts of mercy are to be extended. That lenity which would prompt us to give up our rights on all occasions to lawless men, is not mercy, but would often lead to mischievous consequences; it would often tend to harden sinners in their vices, and embolden them to treat others as they have done us, with hopes of impunity. By forgiving a man who attempts my life, I may be accessory to the murder of another; by pardoning and giving liberty to the robber whom I have caught breaking into my house, and stealing my goods, I embolden him to rob my neighbour. Nor is it in all cases proper nor prudent for a man to forgive personal injuries, without inflicting salutary and legal punishment. Acts of lenity and mercy to offenders should always consist with a

proper concern for the public good and our own personal safety. Christian mercy, notwithstanding, exercises pity towards the authors of injuries, labours for their repentance, and joys in the hope of their future and eternal welfare. It will never admit of *cruelty* nor *revenge* against an offender. If his crime will admit of it, it is willing to forgive, upon proper marks of repentance. If punishment be absolutely necessary, it would have it to be of the mildest and most gentle nature that circumstances will admit of, and abhors to employ any punishment which has not for its object the security of society and the reformation of the criminal, having nothing at heart but the interest of society, honour and justice, and, like God, *taking no pleasure in the misery of sinners!*

Ample room is also afforded for the display of mercy in the exaction of debts. If the debtor is fallen into poverty by accidents or misfortune, it will bear with him, if able, and circumstances allow, will remit part, or even the whole of the debt; or, if he be even bankrupt by his own faults, and, therefore, justly deserves to suffer, yet, it will consider the circumstances of his innocent family and connexions, and will remit what it can on this behalf.

It need scarce be added here, that a merciful disposition is one of the most amiable and endearing accomplishments in man, and stands the fairest chance of rendering him universally beloved by his fellow creatures.

Let us then "as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on bowels of mercy!"

F. C. D.

## RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

SATURDAY, May 1, 1824.

### REPLY TO HORATIO.

SIR,—I am pleased with the candor, manifested in your communication of April 17th, relative to mine of the 3d of the same month. I intend not to make a formal reply to you, but merely to state, more particularly, my sentiments on the subject, together with some of the reasons which have led me to embrace them. Although I consider the subject highly important and interesting, and generally misunderstood, yet I will endeavour to be as brief as possible, and also to avoid every expression which might render the discussion displeasing to the candid and serious inquirer after truth. I think it best to introduce the subject by calling your attention to the scripture testimony concerning the nature and moral condition of the first Adam, whose image we all bear before we 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ.' Gen. ii. 7. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." 1 Cor. xv. 45. "And so it is written, the first man, Adam, was made a living soul, the last Adam a quickening spirit." Queries. What is a soul? Ans. The first Adam. What is a spirit? Ans. The last Adam. Is a soul immortal? Ans. No. To the first Adam, who was a living soul, God says, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Was there any thing identified with the first Adam that was immortal? Ans. No. Why? Because God excluded him from the tree of life, lest he should eat and live forever. See Gen. iii. 22, 24. Now the grand mistake, as it appears to me, is, that Adam, and all his posterity while bearing his image, and, of course, while excluded from the tree of life, which

\* James ii. 13—Paul. xviii. 25.

† Matt. v. 7.

alone can impart life and immortality to them, are yet possessed of an immortal soul, which liveth forever. Such a thing as an immortal soul is not mentioned in the Bible, and man is nowhere represented as having an immortal principle, originally identified with his nature. The eternal life and immortality of mankind is in Christ, the tree of life. Consequently it is not until we "put off the old man, which is corrupt, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ," that we are possessed of the ability to live forever, in any sense or shape. When we put on Christ this mortal puts on immortality, and this corruptible incorruption; and this appears not to take place on the dissolution of the body, but on its death to sin. "If Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness." Then are we "born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." God alone hath immortality, and God in us is Christ. Being born again we are born of God, who is a spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit (God) is spirit." "That which is born of God cannot sin, because it is born of God." It is the spirit within, that is thus born of God; that is called the new man, bearing the image of Christ. It is by our becoming conformed and assimilated to this Spirit, that we pass from death to life, from sin to holiness, from corruption to incorruption, from mortality to immortality. In this state we are new creatures, and old things, to us, are all passed away. In this state we dwell in God and God in us, and thus become identified with immortality. It is true "there is one God who is over all, and through all, and in us all; in whom we live, and move, and have our being;" and when "the dust returns to the earth as it was, this spirit returns unto God who gave it." But this spirit is not *us* unless we are identified with it, which can only be by its operating on us, like leaven upon meal, to change us entirely in our moral nature. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid, in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Therefore, "as we have borne the image of the earthly we shall also bear the image of the heavenly, and shall all be made alive in Christ, the bread of God which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world." It may have been thought, by some, that when this corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal immortality, that the earthly body will never die. It appears to have been supposed that if Adam had not been excluded from the tree of life, he (i. e. the earthly man) would never have died. But neither the man called Christ, nor his disciples, though filled with the Spirit of God, (the real Christ) and thus identified with immortality, had their external bodies thereby rendered immortal. I see no reason, therefore, for believing that the earthly body will ever become immortal. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Yet it is written "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be made like

unto his glorious body," &c. But this vile body is the church, which, as it is written, Christ "will sanctify and cleanse, with the washing of water by the Word, (power of God) that he may present it to himself a glorious church, (which is his body) not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." This is raising the body in power and glory, and changing it into the image of Christ. "Christ tasted death for every man: he is the Lord, and the Saviour of the body. Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." When the church, or body of Christ, is thus sanctified and cleansed, it will be the whole lump leavened; and thus it will be shown that the Potter hath power over the clay, of the same lump (human nature) to make (first) a vessel of dishonor, and (secondly) a vessel of honor and glory. The church (Zion) will then have put on her beautiful garments, and will shine forth, fair as the sun, &c. But still I do not see that the outward man will be immortal. This mortal indeed will have put on immortality, for we shall all then have put off the old man which is corrupt, and shall have put on the Lord Jesus, which is not corrupt but incorruptible. Nevertheless, as we read of many who had made this exchange, or transition, and whose external bodies were yet as mortal as ever, I conclude the incorruption appertains only to the spiritual, or inner man, which I call the spiritual body, produced by the regenerating Spirit of God, and never to die.

J. B.

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*Extract from a letter, written by JOHN CALVIN in 1561, to the MARQUIS PAET, high Chamberlain to the KING of NAVARRE.*

"Honour, glory, and riches, shall be the reward of your pains, but, above all, do not fail to rid the country of those scoundrels who stir up the people to revolt against us. Such monsters should be exterminated, as I have exterminated Michael Servetus the Spaniard."

Query. How was Servetus exterminated? *Ans.* He was burned at the stake!!! Calvinists,—Look at your prototype!

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#### THE OFFSPRING OF MERCY.

When the Almighty was about to create man, he summoned before him the angels of his attributes, the watchers of his dominion. They stood in council around his hidden throne.

"Create him not," said the angel of Justice; "he will not be equitable to his brethren, he will oppress the weaker."

"Create him not," said the angel of Peace; "he will manure the earth with human blood; the first-born of his race will be the slayer of his brother."

"Create him not," said the angel of Truth; "he will defile thy sanctuary with falsehood, although thou shouldst stamp on his countenance thine image, the seal of confidence."

So spake the angels of the attributes of Jehovah; when Mercy, the youngest and dearest child of the Eternal, arose, and clasping his knees, "Create him, Father," said she, "in thy likeness, the darling of thy loving-kindness. When all thy messengers forsake him, I will seek and support him, and turn his faults to good. Because he is weak, I will incline his bowels to compassion, and his soul to atonement. When he departs from peace, from truth, from



justice, the consequences of his wanderings shall deter him from repeating them, and shall gently lead him to amendment."

The Father of all gave ear, and created man, a weak, faltering being; but in his faults the pupil of Mercy, the son of ever-active and meliorating Love.

Remember thine origin, O man! when thou art hard and unkind towards thy brother. Mercy alone willed thee to be—Love and Pity suckled thee at their bosoms.

From the (Boston) Universalist Magazine.

#### THE LIVING AND DEAD CHILD.

"And she said, O my Lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it."—1 kings iii. 26.

This short history of these two women is calculated for usefulness on various accounts. The account is this:—In the first part of the reign of Solomon, two women only, lived in one house; who both had a young child, one three days older than the other. One of them overlaid her child and it died. At midnight she arose, and took the child of the other woman while she slept, and laid her dead child in her arms. In the morning she found the child was dead; and by the appearance, that it was not her child. The other woman contended that the living child was hers. They both went to Solomon, and told their stories to him.—He heard what each said; but could not decide, as each appeared equally confident of telling truth. "Then said the king, the one saith, this is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead; and the other saith, nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living." He then ordered a sword to be brought to divide the living child. Here he discovered the real mother. When the king ordered the child divided, the true mother exclaimed—"O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it." The other, in a tone of indifference, said, "Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it." This led the king to say, "Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it; she is the mother thereof."

Two things are clearly seen here,—*natural affection*, in one, and *no affection* in the other, or as Paul said, one, "*without natural affection*." Each one will say, she was the wicked woman, who wished the innocent babe slain. The other chose rather to give up her son, than to have him slain.

These two women, represent very many people at the present time. Tell them all men will have an end at death, that there is no resurrection, angels nor spirits, that death is an everlasting sleep, that there will be no life but this, and they are moved and cry out, *Atheists! Devils! Blasphemers! Infidels* and many other names of this kind. This would give them a general alarm. Tell them God loves all men, and "will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." That Christ "is the Saviour of the world," That "He came to seek and save that which was lost," That "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and earth, even in him;"—tell them these glorious things which caused the heavenly hosts to sing in highest strains—Glory to God, on earth peace and good will toward men, and the whole country is in a state of alarm. "False teachers! false prophets! with lies making sad the hearts of the righteous! licentious doctrine! damnable heresies! leading poor souls to destruction! the doctrine of devils; men of immoral characters, deceiving, if possible, the very elect!!!"

Men and women of candor, and good sense, who see God's wisdom in his works, who view men the offspring of God, bearing his image, fed and clothed from his bounty,

when they hear those joyful tidings, are filled with joy, and embrace it as God's truth, which is in harmony with all his works, and believing it rejoice with joy unspeakable. The others cry out divide the living child. Let it be, neither *all* lost, nor *all* saved; but divide them, let Christ have a few, and satan the remainder, and our souls are fed with wholesome, sound doctrine.

Such people like the pretended mother, can set and sing, "Parents and children then must part,

Must part to meet no more.

O there will be mourning, mourning,

At the Judgment seat of Christ," &c.

Those who can sing in this manner, must either sing without *understanding*, or "*without natural affection*."

E. S.

#### BISHOP NEWTON'S COMMENTS, &c.

Bishop Newton, in his Dissertations on the Prophecies, 3th edit. vol. ii. p. 384 commenting on Dan. xii. 2. expresses himself thus:—"Such expressions can with truth and propriety be applied only to the general resurrection of the just and unjust: and though it be said, "*Many* of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake," yet that is no objection to the truth here delivered; for, as Theodoret observed long ago, the prophet hath said *many* for *all*, in the same manner as St. Paul hath put *many* for *all*, when he said, 'If through the offence of one, *many* be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto *many*.'" Rom. v. 15. And again, ver. 19. "As by one man's disobedience *many* were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall *many* be made righteous." Now, Reader, I appeal to your good sense, what does the above language of Bishop Newton amount to, but downright Universalism? Lay aside your prejudice, and examine it once more, with an eye of candour, and see if we differ in our opinion. And as the Bishop said, "St. Paul hath put *many* for *all*," please to leave out the word *many*, and substitute the word *all*, and see what it will amount to. Why, Reader, as sure as that you have a Christian name, it will amount to *Universalism*, in plain English. Let us read it; ver. 15. "It through the offence of one *all* be dead, much more the grace of God, and the *gift* by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto *all*." Ver. 19. "As by one man's disobedience *all* were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall *all* be made righteous." What, Reader, shall *ALL* be made righteous? Yes; Bishop Newton confesses it. Will any of those who are made righteous be given to the devil, to be roasted without mercy? You dare not say it: for David saith, Ps. xxxiv. 17. "The Righteous cry, and the Lord heareth and delivereth them out of all their troubles." And again, ver. 19. he says, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." But, reader, although Bishop Newton acknowledges that all shall be made righteous, yet you may still doubt it, and persist in your unbelief. Well, then, I will introduce testimony which you dare not doubt: It is the oath of Almighty God, and is found in the forty-fifth chapter of Isaiah. It reads thus: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely shall say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength," &c. Well, then, if every knee and every tongue shall have righteousness, then surely every knee and every tongue will be righteous; for "No corrupt tree can bring forth good fruit." Reader, how long will you fly in the face of Omnipotence, and, by your unbelief, give God the lie? How long will you credence to the abominable system of Calvin? Let us examine his system. What does Calvinism amount to? It amounts to the following:

The eternal God of love and mercy, ere he made man,

decreed, with Infinite *hatred* and *cruelty*, that the non-elect (comprising innumerable millions then and yet unborn) should be eternally afflicted, with inexpressible agony, for performing those very actions, which he, by his Infinite power, foreordained they *should* perform.

Proof, from the Assembly's Catechism.

Question: What are the decrees of God?

Answer. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he has *foreordained whatsoever comes to pass*.

Query. Did not the death of Michael Servetus *come to pass* by the means of your founder, John Calvin? and will God afflict him to all eternity for doing that which he, by his Infinite power, had decreed he should do? Answer, ye men of wisdom. [Gospel Herald.]

#### QUESTIONS FOR TRINITARIANS.

Our Trinitarian friends who worship in the Episcopal form, after the Church of England, in repeating their Litany, say, they supplicate the mercy of God—by his holy nativity, and circumcision—by his fastings and temptations—by his agony and bloody sweat—by his precious death and burial.

Please to answer—Do you really believe that God was *born*? Do you believe that God was *circumcised*? That God *fasted*, and was *tempted*? Do you believe that God was in an *agony* of pain, and sweat *blood*? Do you believe that God *died*, and was *buried*? If you believe these things, you outrage reason, and deny the Scriptures. If you do not believe them, why do you make a solemn mockery of absurdity?

We make this appeal to reasonable beings. Let every rational person ponder well these things, before they shall again address the Great JEHOVAH in this unjustifiable and absurd manner.—*ib.*

From the (Boston) Universalist Magazine.

#### IMMORTALITY.

That orient beam which cheers the morn,  
And drives the murky gloom away,  
Through trackless ether swiftly borne,  
To welcome in the infant day,  
Reminds me of that heav'nly light,  
Whose rays, dispersing error's gloom,  
Open to man a glory bright,  
In a fair world beyond the tomb.

Those varying scenes of beauty fair,  
Which welcome in the youthful spring;  
The blooming fields, the fragrant air,  
The leafy groves and birds that sing,  
Remind me of that promis'd day,  
When from the dead, mankind shall rise  
As pure as light, and wing his way  
To spring eternal in the skies.

H. B.

"And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."—Micah vi. 8.

"This world's" not *all* a fleeting show,  
"For man's illusion given;"  
He, that hath sooth'd a widow's woe,  
Or wip'd an orphan's tear, doth know  
There's something here of Heaven.

And he that walk's life's thorny way  
With feelings calm and even,  
Whose path is lit, from day to day,  
By virtue's bright and steady ray,  
Hath something felt of Heaven.

He, that the christian course hath ran,

And all his foes forgiven,  
Who measures out life's little span  
In love to God and love to man,  
On earth hath tasted Heaven.

Eastern Argus.

#### FRIENDSHIP.

Just like Friendship is yon bubble  
Floating down the limpid stream,  
Not a breath its course to trouble,  
Glitt'ring in the noontide beam.

But, should a cloud o'ershade the sky,  
This little meteor of an hour  
Would vanish, and with sunshine die—  
It could not bear the tempest's low'r.

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